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Book Reviews.

HISTORY OF GLOUCESTER COUNTY, VIRGINIA, AND ITS FAMILIES.—

By (Mrs.) Sally Nelson Robins, (assistant librarian of the Virginia Historical Society). Photographs by Miss Blanche Dimmock, of Sherwood, Va. West, Johnston & Co., Richmond, Va., 1893; pp. 21.

The first essay towards this charming little book was published in a Richmond newspaper; but the demand for its reproduction in a more permanent form was so strong, that the accomplished authoress, making valuable additions, and including views of historic places in Gloucester (by a skilfull amateur of that county), republished it in its present shape.

To compress into twenty pages two hundred and fifty years of the history of a section that always figured largely in Virginian affairs, was not an easy task; but Mrs. Robins is to be congratulated on the successful way in which she has accomplished it—a success which is not only due to a pleasant style and a quick conception of the striking and picturesque, but largely to that which makes Campbell still (in spite of our present increased knowledge of the manuscript sources of Virginia history) the best and most interesting of our historians—a loving regard for her subject, and an intimate personal acquaintance with the people and places of which she treats.

Not only are we given a succinct account of the history of the county, but a series of sketches of domestic life; which, brief though they be, are of permanent value as a contribution to the history of the Virginia people.

Mrs. Robins has set an example which we hope may be followed in every county of the State. Elaborate county histories are works which require much time, labor and expense. Hardly a county in the Northern and Central (and in many of the Western States) is without such a history, and we hope that at some time in the future the same will be the case in Virginia. But in the meantime let the "shorter histories" be prepared and published, which will pave the way to greater things. Many years ago when the Gentleman's Magazine stood highest as 'an antiquarian's oracle, its proprietors thought it worth while to publish a series of county histories, very much in the manner of Mrs. Robins's pamphlet.

In only a few instances can we find an error which should be corrected. On page 3 it is stated that one of the shires formed in 1631 was named Pamunkey. It was in 1634 that the country was divided into shires, and that which included the present Gloucester, was called Charles river. (*Hening* I, 224). York river was at one time called Pamunkey, but none of the counties was ever so called. And the list

of officers given on page 8 is not, necessarily, of those who served in the Revolution, but of those who bore militia commissions in the county at the beginning of the war.

Though a writer would be greatly handicapped by the total destruction of the county records, no part of Virginia would afford a superior field for a full history of the sort referred to. In the present Gloucester was the chief residence of Powhatan, the scene of many of the most interesting incidents of early colonial history, the home of Pocahontas, and the place of her celebrated rescue of John Smith (which, notwithstanding a careful consideration of the objections of later critics, we fully believe in). The writings of the early settlers give much that should be embodied in such a history, as we are thinking of. Here also would be the most appropriate place for a biography of the noble and generous Indian princess, including all that can be gathered of her life in Virginia, her marriage, her visit to England, where, as old Purchas, who knew her and her husband, says, "She bore herself ever as the daughter of a king," and of her early and lamented death. In such a work too, that careful, unexaggerated and critical account of Bacon's Rebellion (one of the desiderata of Virginia history, for which ample material is now accessible), would have a most suitable place, for it was in this county that many of the most active participants lived, and here the leader of the rebels died. In the same work should be also given an account of that desperate protest against low prices, "plant cutting," for here was the principal seat of the disturbance, and Matthew Kemp, the county lieutenant of Gloucester, was in command of the militia called out to suppress the rioters. Another subject to be included would be what was termed "Bickenhead's plot," by the white servants to rise against their masters. The later history, including the Revolutionary period, and the time of poverty and distress immediately succeeding that war, might be made of great interest, and the same is the case with a more modern period.

While, as has been stated, the county records have been destroyed yet much valuable material remains. The records of York, prior to 1652, contain much bearing on people and places on the other side of the river. Abstracts of all of the land grants (which are, happily, preserved and well cared for in the State Land Office) should be given. All references to military services of Gloucester men in the Revolution (for which many data remains in the Land Office, and elsewhere in the capitol) should be transcribed. Hening's Statutes at Large, such a historian, should, of course, have at his finger's end; and he will also find much of use to him in the Council Journals, Journals of the Burgesses, the Virginia Calendar of State Papers, and the numerous copies and Abstracts from the English Public Records, which are now in the State Library. The newspapers, both before and after the Revolution, will

well repay a thorough examination, and the various parish registers and vestry-books might well be copied in entirety. In the capitol are likewise, besides the records already named, lists of all magistrates, sheriffs, and militia officers since the Revolution.

No county in Virginia affords a richer subject to the genealogist than Gloucester, and this portion of the county history, carefully and thoroughly done, would be of great interest and value. Among the families which should be treated of (and there are others equally worthy) are those of Warner, founded by Augustine Warner, who came to Virginia about 1628, ultimately settled at "Warner Hall," and was long a member of the Council; Lewis, whose ancestor Robert Lewis is said to have been a native of Breconshire, Wales, and whose pedigree is stated to have been traced by a descendant (since the late war) to a sister or daughter of the Protector, Duke of Somerset, and to a long Welsh pedigree (the pedigree is printed in the "History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley" though no authority is there given); Gwynne, whose ancestor was Colonel Hugh Gwynne, one of the first Burgesses from the county in 1652; and also the descendants of Frances Willis, a native of Oxford, another of the first Burgesses, and a member of the Council, who died in London, leaving his Virginia property to his nephew, whose descendants long lived at "White Hall;" of Richard Pate, Burgess in 1653, &c., whose nephew John Pate (son of Colonel Thomas Pate who was a vestryman of Petsworth in 1677) succeeded to his uncle's estate; of George Seaton, a justice of the county, who took part with the insurgents in Bacon's Rebellion, and some of whose descendants probably lived in King William (W. W. Seaton, of the *National Intelligencer* was of the latter family); of John Page, ancestor of the well-known family of "Rosewell" and elsewhere; of Major Lewis Burwell, of "Carter's Creek," who as Mr. C. P. Keith has lately shown in his exceedingly valuable work, was son of Edward Burwell, and grandson of another Edward Burwell, both of Harlington, Bedfordshire, and who was maternally descended from the Bedells of Catworth, Huntingdonshire; of John Washington, of "Highgate;" of Edward and Richard Wyatt, sons of Rev. Hawte Wyatt, and nephews of Governor Sir Francis Wyatt, whose ancestry was hardly surpassed in historic note by any untitled family in England (Edward Wyatt had a son, Conquest Wyatt, who was sheriff of the county, and Richard had a son, Thomas, who had a grant of land in 1666); of Rev. John Dixon (son, according to a deed in Stafford, of John Dixon, Esq., of Bristol, England), who was for a number of years rector of Kingston parish, and whose descendants, now extinct in the male line, intermarried with the Peytons, Throckmortons and Burwells; of John Armistead, sheriff of Gloucester, 1676; son of William the immigrant, and ancestor of the "Hesse," and other branches of the name; of Richard Cary (probably a Bristol man) who lived in the county in 1662, or earlier; of John

Clayton, the botanist and author of "Flora Virginica," county clerk for many years, son of John Clayton, attorney-general of Virginia, nephew of Lieutenant-General Jasper Clayton, who was killed at Dettingen, and grandson of Sir Wm. Bowyer, Baronet; of John Fox, one line of whose descendants lived in King and Queen and King William; of Rev. Charles Grymes, formerly a minister in York county, whose son John removed to "Grymesby," in Middlesex, and was the father of John Grymes, of "Brandon," though some of his descendants returned to Gloucester; of Edmond Kemp, who was ancestor of the families of the name in both Gloucester and Middlesex (a record preserved in Lancaster shows this Edmond Kemp acting as attorney for Sir Robert Kemp, Knight, while the Visitation of Norfolk gives the names of Robert, Richard and Edmond Kemp, among the children of Robert Kemp, Esq., of Gissing. Perhaps Richard was Secretary Richard Kemp, of Virginia); of Samuel Matthews, who removed to the county from King and Queen, and was son of John Matthews, of Stafford, and grandson or great grandson of Governor Samuel Matthews; of Major Robert Peyton, whose descendants became heirs to the Peyton of Isleham baronetcy, and who was a grandson of Chief Justice Richardson; of John Robins, of "Robins' Neck," who came to Virginia in 1623, and died about 1656; of Thomas Seawell, who had a grant in 1675, and who not only has numbered in the past among his descendants men eminent in the army and at the bar; but also at present, two accomplished ladies of the name, whose contributions to current literature are well known; of the Tabbs, whose emigrant ancestor settled in Elizabeth City about 1636; of William Thornton, who was in the colony in 1646, and who now has descendants in nearly every county in Virginia and every State and Territory in the Union; of Col. George Reade of the Council, who was brother of Robert Reade, private secretary to Windebanke, Secretary of State *temp*, Charles I, and who was an ancestor of George Washington; of James Whiting, whose son (as is believed), Henry was member of the Council and treasurer, and so many of whose descendants have filled important offices in the county, and in the Assembly; of the ministers Emanuel Jones, Robert Yates, Robert Read, Fontaine, &c.; of John Smith, of "Purton," a branch of whose descendants settled at "Shooters Hill," Middlesex, and afterwards in Frederick county and elsewhere; of Col. Lawrence Smith, one of whose sons lived in York (from christian names and other stronger evidences it seems probable that from these two early settlers John and Lawrence Smith, descended a numerous progeny in Gloucester, York, Middlesex, Essex, Caroline, Spotsylvania, Northumberland, and other counties, whose representatives are now scattered throughout the whole country); of John Buckner, whose descendants are now widespread; of Mordecai Cooke, who had a grant of 1,174 acres in Mobjack bay in 1650, and many generations of whose descend-

ants lived at "Warham;" of Richard Bernard, who had, also, it is believed, descendants in the Northern Neck; of Col. Richard and William Dudley, who were in the county before 1660, and who had descendants both there and in Middlesex (and if anything can be judged from the constant recurrence of the name Ambrose—Col. Richard Dudley had a son of the name—descendants also in King and Queen, Spotsylvania, and Kentucky); there were likewise the Throckmortons, whose descent can be traced to the family of that name at Ellington, Huntingdonshire; the Thrustons, whose ancestor was Chamberlain, of Bristol, early in the 17th century, and of whom was Charles Morgan Thruston, the "fighting parson;" the families of Taliaferro, which, through their immigrant ancestor Robert Taliaferro, settled first in Gloucester, came from King and Queen; Alexander, Hubbard, Booker, Elliott, Roane, Catlett (the maternal ancestors of our authoress), Dabney, Digges, Roy, Rootes, Jones, Booth, Sinclair, Porteus (the family of Bishop Porteus), Pratt, Tompkins, Baytop, Garland, Hughes, Ranson, Billop, and others. Some of these names are of comparatively recent immigration from other counties, and full accounts of the families in general might be left to those who treat of the counties from which they came. Such are, in a crude way, some of our notions on a county history.

And now to return to the little book, whose excellence has suggested the idea of what a large history should be, we again extend to Mrs. Robins our congratulations on the success of her work, and our thanks for the pleasure and profit derived from it.

We suggest that she do not abandon the field in which she has made so good an essay, but continue to cultivate it. With the materials we have no doubt she has, or can obtain, there must be subjects in abundance; but especially biographical ones, which it is to be hoped she will make use of.

PETER FRANCISCO, SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION.—By Miss N. B. Winston. Richmond, Va., West, Johnston & Co., 1893.

This little volume in paper contains a sketch, which was prepared for the Old Dominion Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, of Peter Francisco, one of the most distinguished of the minor characters of Virginia, who took part in the Revolutionary War. Miss Winston has put together in a very interesting form all the information which was to be obtained about this local hero, and has succeeded in making a valuable contribution to history. Much of the matter is entirely new. The excellence of this sketch suggests how admirable a field for the biographical writer the history of Virginia is. What an interesting series of short biographies might be written of her prominent characters, who troop across the historical stage, representing a most astonishing variety of greatness in action. No community in